

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 04264 010633Z

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SUBJ: AUSTRALIAN MEDIA REACTION TO VISIT TO WASHINGTON BY
PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM

1. SUMMARY: AUSTRALIAN MEDIA HAVE GIVEN VERY FULL COVERAGE TO WHITLAM VISIT TO WASHINGTON AND ARE UNANIMOUS IN PROCLAIMING IT HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL. EDITORIAL COMMENT AS ENTHUSIASTIC AS ARTICLES FROM CORRESPONDENTS ACCOMPANYING WHITLAM. END SUMMARY.

2. DETAILS OF WHITLAM VISIT TO WASHINGTON JULY 30-31 ARE FRONT-PAGED IN ALL AUSTRALIAN DAILIES AUGUST 1, WITH NUMEROUS PAPERS CARRYING EXTENDED EDITORIAL COMMENT. PRESS IS UNANIMOUS IN PROCLAIMING VISIT HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL, BOTH IN GENERAL TERMS AS WELL AS IN TERMS OF REPAIRING STRAINS OF PAST SIX MONTHS OR SO. ABC RADIO CARRIED TEXT OF PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH TO NATIONAL PRESS CLUB, THOUGH NOT QUESTION PERIOD. TV PROGRAMS HAVE SO FAR BEEN LIMITED TO NEWSCASTS, BUT FULLER COVERAGE EXPECTED IN NEXT DAY OR SO, AS TAPE OF WHITLAM NATIONAL PRESS CLUB SPEECH EXPECTED.

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PAGE 02 CANBER 04264 010633Z

3. ALTHOUGH SOME OF HEADLINES IN MORE SENSATIONAL PAPERS HAVE EMPHASIZED POINTS WHERE WHITLAM UNDERLINED AUSTRALIAN INDEPENDENCE, MOST PAPERS HAVE DWELT AT LENGTH ON WARMTH OF RECEPTION WHITLAM HAD, STRENUOUS DAY JULY 30 GOING FROM MEETING TO MEETING, AND CORDIAL AND CONCILIATORY TERMS OF SPEECH TO NATIONAL PRESS CLUB. SENSATIONAL PAPERS TOOK USUAL LINE (DAILY MIRROR, "GOUGH SOCKS IT TO 'EM* WE'RE NOT A SATELLITE, U.S. TOLD"; MELBOURNE HERALD, "SHAKE UP SEATO, SAYS PM. HIS ATTACK SHOCKS U.S. HOSTS"). MORE RESPONSIBLE PAPERS EMPHASIZED POSITIVE (AUSTRALIAN, "LABOR NOT ANTI-AMERICAN, WHITLAM ASSURES NIXON. SEATO WON'T BE TORPEDOED, ROGERS TOLD".; AGE, "WHITLAM HEALS U.S. BREACH"; SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, "PM SEEMS TO CLEAR THE AIR").

4. BODY OF ARTICLES BY PRESS ACCOMPANYING WHITLAM WAS GENERALLY CONSTRUCTIVE, REFLECTING WARMTH OF GREETING BY PRESIDENT, SECRETARY ROGERS, AND DR. KISSINGER; SUCCESSFUL MEETING WITH SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE; AND WIDE INTEREST IN WHITLAM SPEECH TO NATIONAL PRESS CLUB. AUSTRALIAN CARRIED THREE-PAGE REPORT BY ALAN RAMSAY, WHO REPORTED PM HAD DONE MUCH TO DISPEL DOUBTS IN U.S. ABOUT ANTI-AMERICANISM IN ALP. RAMSAY SAID WHITLAM APPEARED TO SHIFT GROUND ON SEATO. HE ALSO REPORTED WHITLAM REFUSED TO MODIFY STANCE ON HANOI BOMBING WHEN QUESTIONED AT PRESS CLUB. RAMSAY REPORTED SENATOR FULBRIGHT'S PRAISE FOR FOREIGN POLICIES OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT. FINANCIAL REVIEW FRONT PAGE STORY BY ROBERT HAUPT SAID THAT "WHITLAM SHOWS THE U.S. WHO CONTROLS THE PARTY," IN REFERENCE TO WHITLAM'S HANDLING OF ALP FEDERAL CONFERENCE. HAUPT NOTED THAT WHITLAM HAD ENGAGED IN HYPERBOLE IN STATING THAT THE ONLY U.S. DEFENSE INSTALLATION IN AUSTRALIA THAT REMAINED CONTENTIOUS IN ANY SENSE IS NORTH WEST CAPE. HAUPT SAID THAT PINE GAP AND WOOMERA REMAIN SOMEWHAT SENSITIVE ISSUES. ALAN BARNES IN AGE SAID THAT PM WHITLAM WAS DETERMINED TO THAW COOLNESS AT WHITE HOUSE AND SEEMS TO HAVE SUCCEEDED. SYDNEY MORNING HERALD'S BRIAN JOHNS REPORTED, "PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM HAD HIS ONE AMERICAN DAY OF THE YEAR HERE YESTERDAY--AND OUTWARDLY IT WAS A SUCCESS." JOHNS' ONLY RESERVATION WAS THAT THERE WAS NO WAY OF KNOWING WHAT PRESIDENT NIXON REALLY THOUGHT.

5. EDITORIAL COMMENT WAS EQUALLY SATISFIED. AUSTRALIAN EDIT, TITLED "WHITLAM WOWS WASHINGTON", WELCOMED PM STATEMENT THAT AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT IS NOT TO BE CONSIDERED ANTI-AMERICAN. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 CANBER 04264 010633Z

IT SAID, 2WHITLAM HAS DONE WELL TO ESTABLISH SO CLEARLY AN INDEPENDENT BUT FRIENDLY ASSOCIATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, WHICH MUST SURELY BE THE RIGHT ONE FOR AUSTRALIA TO PURSUE AT PRESENT." FINANCIAL REVIEW EDITORIAL STATED WITH APPROVAL THAT "PRESIDENT NIXON'S FOREIGN POLICY DOCTRINE ENCOURAGES AUSTRALIA AND OTHER MIDDLE RANK POWERS TO SHAPE THEIR OWN ATTITUDES AND POLICIES IN A WAY WHICH DIRECTLY REFLECTS THEIR NATIONAL INTERESTS." AGE EDITORIAL CONCLUDED, "IF MEETING WAS NOT A MARRIAGE OF TRUE

MINDS, IT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN HONEST AND USEFUL, FREE FROM PROVOCATION OR SYCOPHANCY, AND A FIRST STEP TOWARDS A HEALTHIER AND MORE REALISTIC PARTNERSHIP." SYDNEY MORNING HERALD EDIT ECHOED WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN WARREN'S ASSESSMENT OF WHITLAM MEETING WITH PRESIDENT NIXON AS "CORDIAL AND FRANK". IT WENT ON TO MENTION WHITLAM'S REFERENCES TO GREATER INDEPENDENCE FOR AUSTRALIA IN FOREIGN POLICY AND ASKED HOW AND WHERE IS AUSTRALIA GOING TO BE INDEPENDENT, AND HOW WILL THIS SERVE AUSTRALIAN INTERESTS. DAILY TELEGRAPH EDIT SUGGESTED THAT WHITLAM'S MORE TALKATIVE MINISTERS WHO HAVE STRAINED U.S.-AUSTRALIAN RELATIONS MIGHT LEARN SOMETHING FROM THE WAY THE PM IS HANDLING HIMSELF.

6. COMMENT: AS SEEN THROUGH AUSTRALIAN MEDIA, VISIT HAS BEEN A SPECTACULAR SUCCESS. AUSTRALIAN PAPERS WITH WIDELY DIFFERING POLITICAL OUTLOOKS HAVE EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH OUTCOME OF VISIT, WITH SOME EXPRESSING RELIEF THAT TENSIONS OF PAST SIX MONTHS HAVE DISSIPATED.
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